

# **ALBERTO CAMPO BAEZA**

## **MORE WITH LESS**

### *Essentiality*

I propose an ESSENTIAL Architecture of IDEA, LIGHT and SPACE

#### **IDEA**

An Architecture that is born of an IDEA

Without an IDEA, Architecture would be pointless, only empty form

An IDEA which is capable of: serving (function), responding to a place (context), resolving itself geometrically (composition), materialising itself physically (construction)

Architecture is always a built IDEA. The History of Architecture is the History of built IDEAS. Forms change, they crumble, but the IDEAS remain, they are eternal

#### **LIGHT**

An Architecture is brought into existence by LIGHT

Without LIGHT Architecture is nothing

LIGHT is an essential material in the construction of Architecture

LIGHT is that which creates a relation, a tension between man and Architectural space

#### **SPACE**

An Architecture is translated into an ESSENTIAL SPACE

SPACE is shaped by FORM through the minimal, indispensable number of elements capable of translating the IDEA with precision

A SPACE is capable of touching people

More with Less

This Architecture, born of an IDEA, shaped by ESSENTIAL spaces and tensed by LIGHT, allows people to find in it the BEAUTY that only Architecture is capable of offering them. That BEAUTY which is always the final stop on this long journey towards Liberty, which is CREATION

With these notes on IDEA, LIGHT and ESSENTIALITY, I offer here some of my work in which I have attempted to translate this simple principle of 'MORE WITH LESS'

## PRECISIONS I

About ESSENTIALITY

ESSENTIAL Architecture (Not Essentialist) is NOT MINIMALISM

ESSENTIALITY	is NOT	EssentialISM
	is NOT an	ISM
	is NOT a	MinimalISM
	is	ESSENTIALITY
	is	Precision
	is something more than only a	
	question of Form	
	is a	BUILT IDEA
	is	POETIC
	is	MORE WITH LESS

ESSENTIAL ARCHITECTURE is NOT	cold and cruel
is NOT	perfectionist and
untouchable	
is NOT	imposing and
overwhelming	
is NOT only to be photographed	
is	CLEAN and SIMPLE
is	NATURAL and OPEN
is	FREE and LIBERATING
is	FOR LIVING

I would like my ARCHITECTURE to be:

as PRECISE as Bernini's, as  
luminous  
as NATURAL as Barragan's,  
architecture for the man  
as *DESHABILLÉ* as Le  
Corbusier's, as strong and  
powerful  
  
not for the purpose of becoming  
famous  
but making man happy  
  
not only for this time  
but forever  
  
not to be photographed  
but to be lived

## PRECISIONS II

About the perfect perfectionist work

(Praise of IMPERFECTION)

I think, like Heidegger, that architectural spaces tensed up by the LIGHT are to be inhabited by the man

I think, like Barragan, that creation is of cleaner and more free spaces, it's not the creation of hard, cold and untouchable ones. Architectural spaces are to be inhabited (they are not freezers)

I think, like Le Corbusier, that the creation of spaces for man calls for a level of imperfection (*deshabillé*) which underlines the power of architecture

Architectural spaces should house man not expel him. In this way the Parthenon, the Hagia Sofia or the Pantheon have all housed man in History (they are admirably corroded)

And even more than perfect and unpolluted houses, I prefer:

The imperfect Villa Savoie by Le Corbusier  
The decorticated houses by Barragan  
The huddled Villa Malaparte by Libera  
and  
Melnikov's own defective house in Moscow  
Utzon's own corroded house in Palma

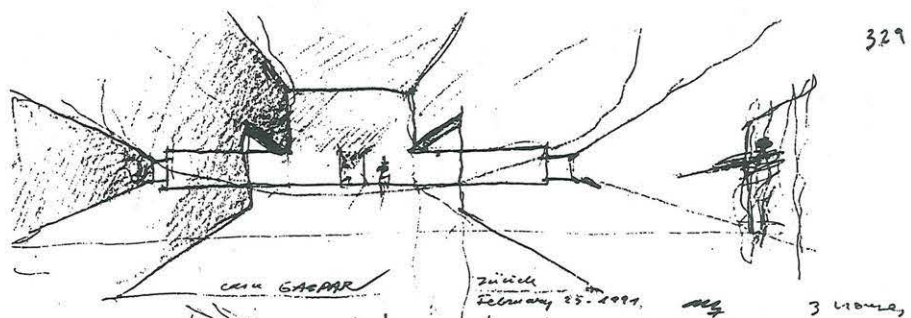
And I discover in them that the History of Architecture is the History of IDEAS, of BUILT IDEAS, of magnificent imperfect works with magnificent LIGHT which provokes a magnificent life, Emotion in man and intelligent Beauty!





## GASPAR HOUSE

Zahora, Cadiz



### *Hortus Conclusus – (Closed Grove)*

On the day that the artist came back from the sea drenched in light, wearing only salt and crowned with foam, and arriving at the orange grove he decided to establish his resting place there.

With his back to the sun and facing his own long shadow, he pointed with his outstretched arms the four cardinal points which defined a square. He made the floor out of stone and walled in with four, high, white walls. In the wall which faced the sunset, he opened a door, and after crossing its threshold, he was enclosed into this serene walled enclosure.

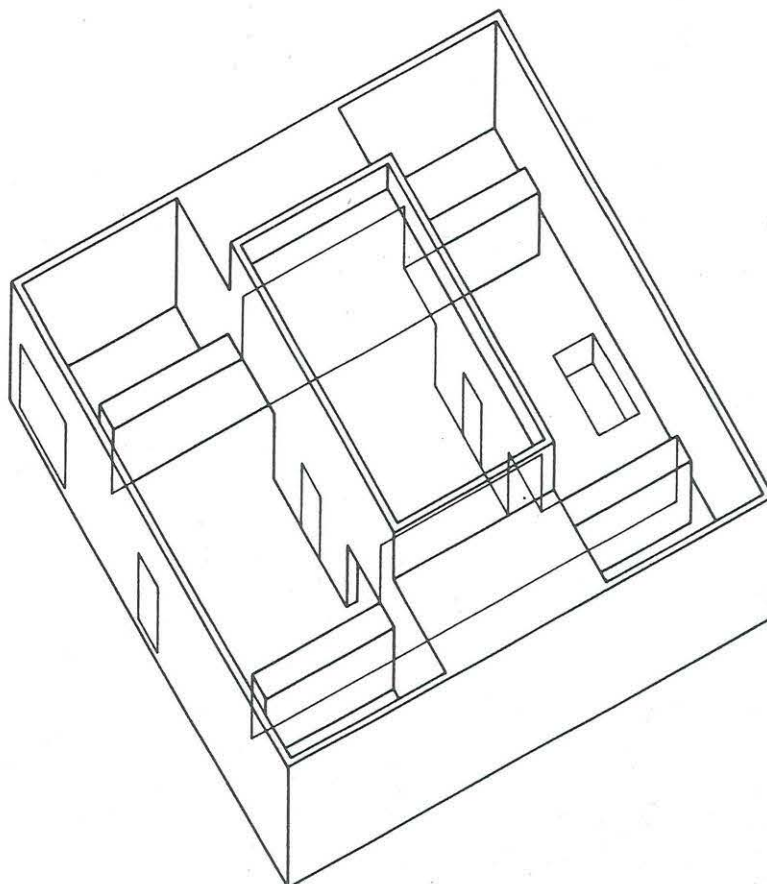
Once inside he divided the square into three equal parts, raising two with walls higher than the surrounding walls. He put a ceiling on them creating a patio in front and another one behind. In it he opened another door to enter into a higher and darker space.

Once inside he pierced and shaped the white wall, chiselling shadows with light. Raising the other walls he established prodigious relations.

He planted four green lemon trees, two in the patio in front, and the other two in the patio behind. And there, in the back, ending the axis of all the doors, he dug a grave from the earth from where the water came to sing, waking up the lemon trees in white lemon blossoms which flooded the air with the scent of Paradise.

And the artist thought that this space of the *present absence* full of light and silence and beauty, was preferable to the medley outside in which our society was racking.

And seeing that that which he had made was good, he rested there to live happily ever after.



ABOVE AND BELOW: Conceptual perspective sketch; axonometric







## PUBLIC SCHOOL

### Cadiz

#### *Looking at the Sea*

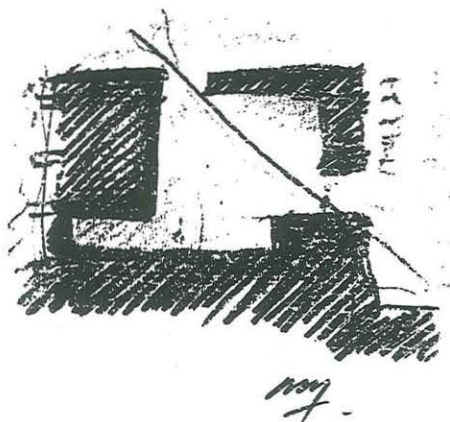
Cadiz, the oldest city in the Occident, has always had its eyes open to the sea. Lots of times, 'a sea of times', its buildings have been raised over themselves. The city raised its look-out towers – today the archetypal image of Cadiz is to be able to look out towards the sea.

The school faces the west horizon of the ocean where the sun is hidden by a different colour with every sunset. At the same sea side, continuing the powerful and lime painted walls of the marine cemetery of Cadiz, and between the sea and our site, is a road. There is always a constant, intense light streaming in.

The building's most public spaces – the main hall, the library and the cafeteria – open out to the landscape and to the light which comes through these high and big holes. The main hall creates a tension with the diagonal light which connects the deep vertical hole to the sea with a precise perforation opened in the ceiling on the opposite wall. Through the main staircase the platform is reached which materialises a free plane. This plane floats on the infinite Atlantic Ocean which is framed by this deep hole.

The library and the cafeteria incorporate this exceptional panorama through another hole with its double-order, which is perforated in its highest and deepest point so that it can be pierced by the sunbeams. The projected solid light emerges from the shadows of the big white wall, putting the space in vibration. In the heart of the building there is a white patio, an abyss of brightness, which works like an articulating mechanism of corridors and classrooms. Four erect palm trees underline its square geometry.

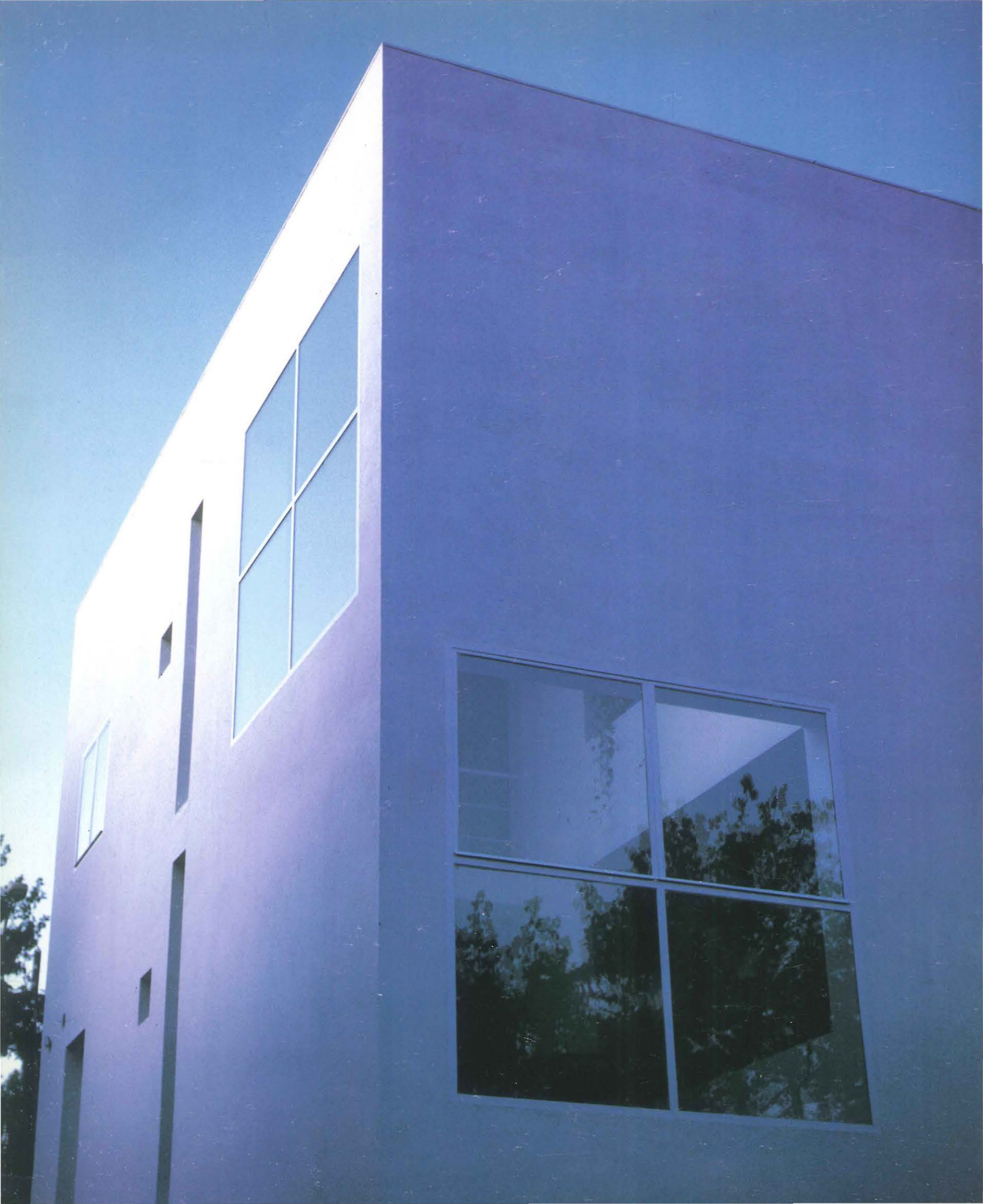
The strong salty scent and the constant murmur of the waves emphasise the palpable sensations of light and shadow, brightness and darkness, serenity and freshness. Once more, there is the attempt to get maximum beauty with minimum elements. MORE WITH LESS.



*Conceptual sketch*









## TURÉGANO HOUSE

Pozuelo, Madrid

### *The fable of the happy architect and the white and cubical hut*

Once upon a time, in an old country, there was a young architect who passionately loved architecture and who, the poor fool, was an artist who thought of and built houses. He was a thinker who built. He was a builder who thought. And thinking and building, dreaming and making his dreams come true, he was immensely happy.

In this same country there were other architects who believed they had exclusive possession of intellectuality, who were convinced of being the only ones in possession of the truth.

And they despised the artist. They said 'He builds! He builds and so he gets dirty!' And they called the artist contaminated, uncultured, out of tune with his times, impure.

In this same country, there were other architects who believed they had exclusive possession of professionalism and who were also convinced of being the only ones in possession of the truth.

And they despised the artist. They said 'He thinks. He's got his head in the clouds!' And they called the artist a radical, they accused him of being hard, of not having his feet on the earth, of being rigorous, a purist.

And between these two furious, stormy oceans, our architect, serene, became strong on his island-self where, happily, he thought and built.

He thought and in his thoughts, conceived handsome works that could and must become reality. He built and there rose up graceful fabrics that expressed those ideas with wonderful clarity.

'I plan as if I were carrying it out. All I think of is do-able, and what I do is in agreement with everything intelligible', he repeated with the Eupalinos of his beloved Valéry.

And he took pleasure in considering that the beauty of his work arose from that built-up thought. 'Without ideas', he said, 'there cannot be any good architecture; architecture is more than just forms.'

'Without building', he explained, 'there cannot be a true architecture. Architecture is something more than just an Idea'.

And so thinking and building, dreaming and making these dreams real he was, is tremendously happy.

One day, what a happy day! our ever-young architect, the artist, dreamt of living within an idea: in a white and cubical hut. Because he had always thought that instead of searching for Paradise and therein the Hut, it was a question of building the Hut and with it Paradise! Once more the myth of the primitive Hut! 'To succeed in being able to build an ideal in order to live within it', reasoned the artist, 'must be the height of happiness for rational man'. To live within an ideal! To live within a dream come true!

On the following day, and how long was that day that lasted almost more than a year! our artist, with the help of other madmen who understood him, set to work and built the idea!

And how his heart beat when those walls were going up that proclaimed that that reality was possible!

And how his spirit trembled when the *light*, caught up, decided to remain for ever among those walls!

And how all his being vibrated with emotion when *beauty* penetrated radiant into that space, never to leave it! The artist thought he would die of happiness.

And on the third day, this day still lasts, he rested. And he saw that what he had done was good. And he lived in that white and luminous house forever happy.

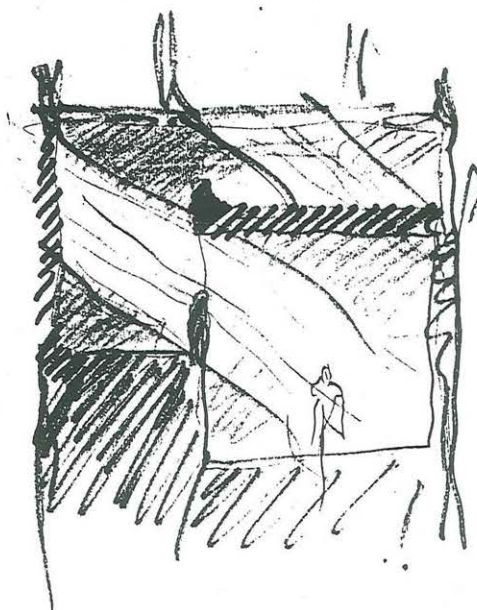
And the birds came to rest on it.

And the trees surrounding it offered their shade and their most enticing fruits.

And the breeze caressed the house as evening came.

And although the artist wished to take refuge in silence, the Light and Beauty and Architecture unceasingly proclaimed to the four winds that there something had happened.

Will somebody, sometime, somewhere succeed in hearing the song of these voices?



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Conceptual sketch







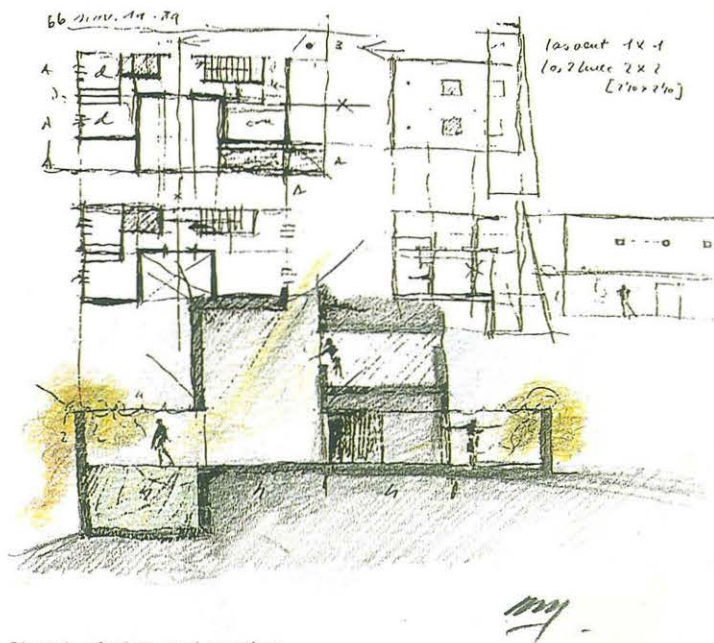
## GARCIA MARCOS HOUSE

Valdemoro, Madrid

*Une boîte à miracles – (A box of miracles)*  
Can a mysterious white box – through the work and grace of architecture – transform itself into a light and large open house?

This conventional single family house is situated in the suburbs of Valdemoro. It is a white prism divided transversally into three parts of 2:3:2 proportions. The central part empties out in its total double height. The ceiling is perforated near the interior wall, producing the vertical entrance of light. The exterior wall is perforated in its lowest part, keeping the same horizontal plane on the exterior, thus making evident the continuity with the horizontal light brought in there. The diagonal light resulting from the conjugation of these two operations places this space under tension.

Fundamentally speaking, this project is conceived as an architecture of rooms, two on each side, articulated over the central space. The serving elements of the stairs and washrooms are situated on both sides of the main axis achieving an effective centring of the circulations. The swimming pool continues the horizontal plan and offers multiple suggestions and inspiration.



Sketch of plan and section